DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 461 784 CG 031 532

AUTHOR Krueger, Debbie
TITLE A Leader's Three Rs: Reading, Reflecting, and Relationships.
PUB DATE 2002-02-00
NOTE 9p.; In: "Implementing Comprehensive School Guidance Programs: Critical Leadership Issues and Successful Responses"; see CG 031 528.
PUB TYPE Opinion Papers (120)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Comprehensive Guidance; Elementary Secondary Education; *Empowerment; Guidance; *Interpersonal Competence; *Leaders; *Leadership; *Leadership Responsibility; School Counseling; School Districts; School Guidance
IDENTIFIERS Texas

ABSTRACT

Empowering others and oneself is an essential task in any organizational framework. Although people are empowered internally, part of that empowerment forms the positive interpersonal relationships built with others. This article discusses how the author, as leader, has learned to empower those around her. Different power bases are listed, with brief examples of how they can be applied. The various sources of power include legitimate; resource; coercive; connection; expert; referent; and reward. Leaders must establish their power as resources capable of meeting the perceived need of their followers. They must also use this power to influence their followers toward desired changes. Applying what is learned and read helps with leadership building, along with the three Rs of leadership (reading, reflecting, relationships). (JDM)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 461 784

A Leader's Three Rs: Reading, Reflecting, and Relationships

by

Debbie Krueger

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

CG031532

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Chapter Four

A Leader's Three Rs: *Reading, Reflecting, and Relationships*

Debbie Krueger
Northside Independent School District, San Antonio, Texas

When first asked to write about empowering leadership, I thought, "What could I add? I've read it all from others." In my 28 years in education, I have been a teacher, an elementary counselor, and for the past five years, a district coordinator for the Student Advisory Program and supervisor to 92 elementary counselors. In each of these roles, I have had someone who has helped me to build my capacity to make decisions and has trusted me as a professional to step up to the task and lead. As an elementary counselor, I participated in professional organizations and district-level leadership roles for site-based decision making; advocated for our program at the state legislature; and gave presentations at local, state, and national conferences and to our local school board.

Empowering Myself

In my present position, I work in a team that fosters collegiality, and I rely on collaboration in all my roles and responsibilities. The interpersonal and behavior styles and skills of the team members are varied, but our greatest strength is our diversity. I am able to plan activities on the basis of program priorities using my own style. I have been made to feel competent as I have used my knowledge and skills to overcome problems through action planning for success. It is my job then to take that plan to the groups and individuals whom I lead to assist them in becoming independent and self-managing. There are structures in place to guide them in their work, standards for accountability, and a way to self-evaluate and reflect on achievement.

Then, again, the list of traits, competencies, and skills of a leader includes reflecting and continuously developing as an effective leader who balances tasks and relationships. As a leader, I also should model Covey's (1990)

characteristics of a principle-centered leader by being a continuous learner, being service-oriented, having positive energy, believing in others' ability and being synergistic. To this list Henderson and Gysbers (1998) add being consistent, confident, trusting of my own instincts in challenging situations, and reflective. Wow! Reading that list makes a leader wonder, "How will I do and be *all* that?"

I am growing to realize the priceless nature of time. We all need more time, more fun, and less stress in our lives. Therefore, as leaders we must first take extraordinary care of ourselves before we can make a difference in the lives of others. Although we are empowered internally, part of that empowerment stems from the positive interpersonal relationships we are able to build with others. Consequently this section of the paper will be about how I have taken those words and applied them to my everyday work. I hope that you will find some helpful suggestions for empowerment in it.

The saying, "No one cares how much you know until they know how much you care," applies to students *and* adults. We need to be cheerleaders—people with a passion for our vision. We empower others by looking for the best in them and building on their strengths. Empowerment occurs through affirmation, trust, and all the other ingredients that contribute to building meaningful and sustaining relationships. Oftentimes we leaders serve as a mirror, and as such we are able to reflect back to others the qualities that they might not always be able to see in themselves. As the saying goes, "I am not what I think I am, I am not what you think I am, I am what I think you think I am."

Bases of Power

I have studied the different power bases involved in leading and empowering others that are listed in Pat Henderson's and Norm Gysbers' book, *Leading and Managing Your School Guidance Program Staff* (1998). I have applied this information in my own role in leading change in my school district. The following sections list the different power bases with brief examples of how I have applied them. As a leader, you have each of these powers. Use them to nurture, motivate, and empower others.

Power comes from a variety of sources, as described in Henderson and Gysbers (1998): legitimate, resource, coercive, connection, expert, referent, and reward. Leaders must establish their power as resources capable of meeting the perceived need of their followers. Second, they use this power to influence their followers toward desired changes and to carry out their responsibilities.

Legitimate Power

To empower others, you first have to empower yourself. Reading and reflecting is one way to accomplish this. Additionally, you have to know the power bases that you work from. The first power base is legitimate—power you have because you have been selected for a position or task (Henderson & Gysbers, 1998). Someone has said, "We have confidence in you, you are respected. There is a high level of trust, be accountable." The higher the level of trust, the more powerful the person and the program. Now that you have been selected, help others to become great leaders. Model excellence.

In my district, elementary cluster leaders are building-level leaders whose role and responsibility it is to lead and support a group of 11 to 14 counselors from six or seven elementary schools. Cluster leaders are invited by building-level counselors to visit their campuses twice a year to provide feedback on beginning- and end-of-the-year reports and program management. In responding to an electronic-mail survey on how they empower the counselors they work with, these leaders responded with several comments:

- "One of the most important things is to provide a climate of caring, trust, and acceptance during our cluster meetings."
- "Provide time for each person to share with the group."
- "It is important to have a common goal."
- It is important "to use each group member's talents and abilities for the benefit of the group."
- "Delegate tasks that others are good at and show much appreciation for their skills."
- "Ask for advice or consultation from others in their area of expertise."

After training campus-level leaders for the Student Advisory Program, cluster leaders were asked to describe how the faculty and students would know their new roles. Among their responses were these:

- "Principal announces new position at faculty meeting and recommits to the program in the introduction."
- "Announcement of new position was made in the school newsletter to parents, a student did an interview on my new role, and 'Congratulations to Mrs._____ for her new responsibilities as campus facilitator' was posted on the marquee."

Resource Power

The resource power base derives from having the capacity to understand the bigger picture, having current and needed information, and being trusted by the organization, which guarantees you will have input into decisions. One resource is obviously money—the acquisition and

distribution of the program budget based on student needs. Facts and information about issues constitute other resources. Part of this power base is also being able to envision what students need and how the program can help meet those needs.

My role as district-level coordinator for the Student Advisory Program was created as part of the Northside Independent School District Strategic Plan. The community believed strongly that it was important for students to learn to set goals, create a plan to achieve them, and evaluate their progress. My job has been to take their words and put them into action by designing and developing a framework and providing training for teachers so they become advisors who can teach and guide students in setting, implementing, and evaluating goals related to learning, service, and responsibility.

Coercive Power

Coercive power is the type that says, "Be afraid of me for fear of negative consequences." It should be your last resort. There is definitely a place and time for coercion, but the empowering leader practices the maxim "praise in public, criticize in private; praise what is right and train for what is wrong." Some examples of my use of coercive power are:

- School counselors are people too, and if they get into an unhealthy relationship situation, the leader may need to use mediation, conflict resolution, and confrontation skills to relieve stress and tension.
- Cluster leaders have realized through their studies and visits that coercion is the strength behind them. They can be more directive in their actions toward team building.

Connection Power

The fourth type of power, connection, is related to legitimate power. Connection power is based on having connections with those who are influential. People want information, and it is the leader's responsibility to provide it or know where to find it. Here are examples of connection power:

- After visiting a campus where I have observed outstanding lessons, I e-mail the campus principal or the assistant superintendent for administration to praise the teacher, advisor, or leader. I then write a personal note to let that individual know what a great lesson it was and how much I appreciate his or her support for the program and the kids.
- In district-level staffing meetings, when I hear information that can be helpful to the programs, I pass it along to the cluster leaders and facilitators. In turn, I provide information at the district level that can help other programs connect to ours.

Expert Power

Expert power comes from having the professional expertise, skills, knowledge, and confidence to make something happen. But to use this power, you must be able to communicate your knowledge and use your organizational skills to problem solve. Having expertise can garner respect. You don't demand respect, you earn it through the ways you relate, react, and respond to others on a daily basis. Here are examples:

- Cluster leaders receive training in supervision from the director of guidance and are provided summer institutes for additional staff development.
- Cluster leaders meet monthly to review a specific case and receive feedback that will support their supervision. They also develop the agenda for the following round of meetings where district information is communicated and skills are imparted.
- Staff team meetings are held regularly, for the right reasons, and for a purpose.

Referent Power

The sixth power base is referent. It is based on you bringing your own style to your leadership role. Be aware of your style and match it to people and situations. Find common values, attitudes, opinions, and experiences. You will get people to adhere to your vision by attracting them, not by forcing them. Covey (1994) defines synergy as being achieved when two or more people work together to create a better solution than either could alone. The attitude is to seek "not your way or my way but a better way." It's like a flock of geese that fly stronger and further by flying in a V. Synergy doesn't just happen. It is a process. You have to get there.

Each month I have networking meetings for the leadership teams that have been through goal-setting and advisory training. The purpose is to share information, discuss concerns of program implementation, and celebrate student successes. This meeting is optional and is held after school from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. Each month 100 to 120 people attend. That response says to me that there is a need for purposeful reflection time, collegiality, and support. Counselors are motivated to attend because they receive needed information in a fun and reflective way, see the power of being a change agent, and are validated for their work, all in caring climate.

Reward Power

The seventh and final power base is reward. For most people, the primary reward is money or a salary. I have limited power over financial

compensation, other than stipends, but I can help people see other rewards. Henderson and Gysbers (1998) suggest that other rewards are achievement (what others think you did), the work itself (what you really do), responsibility (what you help others do), advancement (what you think you can do), and growth (what you believe you might do).

- In the district's second strategic plan, committee members recommended campus-level leadership for the Student Advisory Program to ensure implementation. Most people were skeptical of our ability to accomplish this, but after the third year we were able to receive stipends for the eight schools that are implementing the program, with more to follow in the next annual budget.
- During the month following the facilitators' training, I went to each campus, took the facilitator to breakfast or lunch, and listened to his or her first-month concerns and celebrations. The facilitators were thrilled with our hour together.
- Facilitators, counselors, and my own secretary have shared their goals with me, and now those dreams are being achieved: My secretary is returning to school to finish her degree and become a teacher. One teacher is pursuing her master's degree, another is earning bilingual certification, and a third is applying to a doctoral program.

Learning Resources

I am empowered by information I have read in many books:

- *Principle-Centered Leadership* and *First Things First,* by Stephen Covey;
- *On Becoming a Leader,* by Warren Bennis;
- *Building Community in Schools* and *Leadership for the Schoolhouse,* by Thomas J. Sergiovanni;
- *If You Don't Feed the Teachers, They Eat the Students,* by Neila Connors;
- *Who Moved My Cheese?* by Spencer Johnson, M.D.; and
- *Leading and Managing Your School Guidance Program Staff,* by Pat Henderson and Norm Gysbers

If you are not familiar with these books, I encourage you to seek them out immediately in your favorite bookstore or library or online. What I have learned and what I do as a leader comes from applying what I have read and from the three Rs of leadership: Reading, Reflecting, and Relationships.

References

Bennis, W. (1994). *On becoming a leader.* Cambridge, MA: Perseus Books.

Connors, N. A. (2000). *If you don't feed the teachers, they eat the kids.* Nashville, TN: Incentive Publications.

Covey, S. R. (1990). *Principle-centered leadership.* New York: Simon and Schuster.

Covey, S. R. (1994). *First things first.* New York: Simon and Schuster.

Henderson, P., and Gysbers, N. C. (1998). *Leading and managing your school guidance program staff.* Alexandria, VA: American Counseling Association.

Johnson, S. (1998). *Who moved my cheese?* New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons.

Sergiovanni, T. J. (1994). *Building community in schools.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Sergiovanni, T. J. (1996). *Leadership for the schoolhouse.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

About the Author

Debbie Krueger has been for six years the coordinator of student advisory programs in Northside Independent School District, San Antonio, Texas. In addition to developing the Goal-Setting Student Advisory Program, her job responsibilities include coordinating the district's elementary school counselors and training the building-level leaders of these programs. Prior to her current administrative position, she was an elementary school counselor and a special education teacher. She can be reached at DebbieKrueger@nisd.net or at 5309 Wurzbach Road, Suite 100, San Antonio, TX 78238.